

Scholarship honors former GN teacher

Family members of Marjorie Urciuoli working to help local special needs students

BY JOHN SANTA

Craig Urciuoli spent much of his childhood watching the way he said his mother Marjorie went "above and beyond" for her students.

In the six years since Marjorie Urciuoli, who taught in the Great Neck Public School System for 27 years, died from ovarian cancer, that passion for education has only become more emblazoned in the memories of her son Craig and his older brothers, Anthony and Christopher.

"Whether it was in her career, or outside of work, she was always looking to help people," Craig Urciuoli said of his mother. "I think that was something that both of my parents, and especially my mother, engrained in us."

With the creation of the Marjorie Urciuoli Senior Award \$1,000 scholarship, the Urciuoli family is once again giving back to Great

Neck's students.

The Marjorie Urciuoli Senior Award will go toward the post high school studies of a Great Neck South High School special needs student each year.

The Great Neck Public Schools Board of Education approved the creation of the scholarship during its regular meeting earlier this month.

"She always was looking to go above and beyond and looking to make a difference in people's lives," Craig Urciuoli said. "This was very important to her. She was very into helping the kids in her class."

During her 27-year tenure in the Great Neck School District, Marjorie Urciuoli worked at six different district schools before retiring in 2000. Her 15 years spent teaching special education at John F. Kennedy Elementary School represented Urciuoli's longest stint at any Great Neck school.



Marjorie Urciuoli

Before her death in 2006, Urciuoli was married to her husband Anthony for 41 years.

The Urciuoli's lived in Great Neck for 40 years and all three of their sons are graduates of Great Neck South High School.

"I think it's a wonderful thing," Great Neck South High School

principal Susan Elliott said of the scholarship. "It's very generous. I can only imagine that this woman had to be a wonderful woman to imbue this kind of value in her children."

But the special needs students of Great Neck South are equally as privileged and will continue to benefit from the Urciuoli family's dedication to education, Elliott said.

"I think there's always a need (for scholarships)," the principal said. "I think that college is expensive and it's always helpful to have financial assistance."

The Urciuoli Family Charitable Foundation was established two weeks after Marjorie's death on Aug. 5, 2006, Craig Urciuoli said.

In addition to the Great Neck South scholarship, the Urciuoli Family Charitable Foundation has also provided financial assistance for students across the country.

Students of the Navajo Prepa-

ratory School in Farmington, NM, Youth Consultation Services in Hackensack, NJ, Special Operations Warrior Foundation in Miami, FL. and the City College of New York have all benefited from Urciuoli Family Charitable Foundation scholarships.

"Any child wants to make their parents feel proud," Craig Urciuoli said of his mother. "I do think she would be proud and she would be proud of creating the scholarship opportunity for special needs students."

For Great Neck Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services Joe Hickey, the Urciuoli family's contribution will be put to good use within the district.

"Anytime that you encourage special needs students to continue on with their education after high school, I think that's a great thing," Hickey said.